

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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DRAFTED BY EUR/EE:RAMOSHER:LCB

APPROVED BY D:DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER

EUR:JAARMITAGE

S/S: MR. SEBASTIAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SOFIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 038061

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: SHUM, CGEN, PFOR, BU (MAREVA, RUMYANKA AND YORDANKA)

SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY-DESIGNATE'S MEETING WITH
AMBASSADOR POPOV

1. DEPUTY SECRETARY-DESIGNATE CHRISTOPHER CALLED IN
AMBASSADOR POPOV FEBRUARY 16 TO RAISE WITH HIM GENERAL
ISSUE OF DIVIDED FAMILIES AND TO URGE ESPECIALLY FOR
RESOLUTION OF MAREV CASE.

2. CHRISTOPHER SAID HE APPRECIATED OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS
WITH POPOV HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS AND, IN PARTICULAR, A
CASE OF INTEREST TO BOTH SECRETARY VANCE AND HIMSELF. HE
SAID HE HAD BEEN ASKED TO MAKE KNOWN THE SECRETARY'S
PERSONAL CONCERN REGARDING MAREV CASE. IN LIGHT OF GENERAL
CONCERN OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE NEW ADMINISTRATION FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTION, CHRISTOPHER SAID, HE WAS VERY MUCH
ENCOURAGED BY ACTION OF BULGARIA AND PRESIDENT ZHIVKOV
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IN THIS AREA. HE WAS ALSO GRATIFIED AND REASSURED BY FACT
THAT BULGARIA HAD RESOLVED ALMOST 20 CASES DURING THE LAST
YEAR, AND EVEN MORE BY COMMITMENT OF ZHIVKOV TO RESOLVE
THESE CASES. HOWEVER, IN THIS GENERALLY FAVORABLE SETTING,
WE WERE DISAPPOINTED AND PUZZLED BY GOB'S FAILURE TO ALLOW
MAREV DAUGHTERS TO JOIN PARENTS. CHRISTOPHER ASKED THAT ON
BOTH HUMANITARIAN AND FAMILY GROUNDS (WHICH HE NOTED APPEALS

TO EVERYONE WHO HAS A FAMILY OF HTS OWN) BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES REVIEW CASE AND TAKE ACTION WHICH WOULD MATCH STATESMANLIKE POSITION OF PRESIDENT ZHIVKOV.

3. DEPUTY SECRETARY-DESIGNATE STRESSED TO POPOV THAT VERY HEAVY BURDEN WOULD BE PLACED ON US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS IF THIS CASE CONTINUED. HE NOTED THAT MAREV HAD BEEN DEMONSTRATING BEFORE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR 186 DAYS AND GETTING GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION WHICH REFLECTED BADLY ON BULGARIA. CHRISTOPHER URGED THAT REUNIFICATION OF THIS FAMILY BE ALLOWED, ESPECIALLY AS GIRLS WERE AT VERY IMPORTANT AGE, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT GOB WOULD FOLLOW THROUGH IN THIS INSTANCE IN SAME FORTHCOMING MANNER AS IT ALREADY HAD ON OTHER CASES.

4. POPOV RESPONDED THAT DEPARTMENT'S INFORMATION WAS INCOMPLETE. HE SAID GOB HAD SETTLED NOT 20, BUT 83 CASES ALL TOGETHER. THESE WERE CASES IN WHICH US HAD EXPRESSED INTEREST, AND TOTALED 98 INDIVIDUALS. POPOV ASKED THAT THIS RESULT BE COMPARED WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WHERE THERE WERE FAR MORE CASES. HE STATED THAT OF THE 98 INDIVIDUALS, 15 WERE CHILDREN, AND THAT CASES INVOLVING ONLY 10 PERSONS (INCLUDING 5 CHILDREN) REMAINED UNRESOLVED. POPOV SAID HE WAS PRESENT WHEN DIVIDED FAMILIES WAS DISCUSSED WITH THEN-DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL, AND THAT INGERSOLL HAD BEEN TOLD THAT BULGARIA COULD NOT "CLEAR THE TABLE" BY RESOLVING ALL THESE CASES. HE CLAIMED THAT THIS POSITION HAD BEEN UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTED BY THE US.

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5. POPOV SAID SOME OF 10 REMAINING CASES INCLUDED PERSONS WHO HAD APPLIED FOR PERMISSION TO LEAVE. HE THEN EMPHASIZED TWO GENERAL POINTS: (A) NOONE THAT HAS NOT APPLIED ACCORDING TO ESTABLISHED PROCEDURE WOULD BE GIVEN PERMISSION TO TRAVEL AND (B) GOB WOULD NOT GIVE PERMISSION TO TRAVEL TO ANYONE IN ORDER TO SATISFY PEOPLE ACTIVELY "WORKING AGAINST" BULGARIA. THE LATTER, HE SAID, WAS THE SITUATION WITH MAREVS AND ALSO WITH INKIOV OF RADIO FREE EUROPE. POPOV CLAIMED THAT MRS. MAREV HAD BEEN BEATEN AND THREATENED BY HER HUSBAND TO CONVINCE HER TO LEAVE BULGARIA AND HER CHILDREN. HE THEN STATED THAT MAREV CHILDREN DID NOT RPT DID NOT WISH TO COME TO THE U.S. HE NOTED THAT THEY WERE IN BOARDING SCHOOL AND THAT COURTS HAD APPOINTED A GUARDIAN. POPOV ASKED UNDERSTANDING FOR GOB'S POSITION IN LIGHT OF BULGARIA'S OVERALL RECORD ON DIVIDED FAMILIES. HE MAINTAINED THAT MAREV HAD BEHAVED IN IMPROPER WAY AND WAS ACCUSING BULGARIA OF BEHAVING LIKE TERRORISTS" BY KEEPING HOSTAGES. THERE WOULD BE NO CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO

THEIR CASE, HE SAID, UNTIL THEY STOP THEIR ANTI-BULGARIAN ACTIVITIES. AMBASSADOR SAID HE DID NOT LIKE IT THAT SOMEONE MUST BE PAYING MAREVS' EXPENSES AND INDICATED THAT HE WOULD LIKE USG TO HAVE MAREVS END THEIR DEMONSTRATION.

6. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY(EUR) ARMITAGE NOTED THIS WAS FIRST TIME IT HAD BEEN CLAIMED THAT GIRLS DID NOT WANT TO COME TO THE US. POPOV REPLIED THAT HE ONLY KNEW WHAT HE WAS TOLD, AND NOTED THAT IT WAS ACCEPTABLE IN US NOT TO FORCE CHILDREN AGAINST THEIR WISHES, AS IN KHRISTOV CASE. ARMITAGE ASKED, SINCE THIS WAS FIRST TIME QUESTION OF THE CHILDREN'S WISHES HAD BEEN RAISED, IF GOB WAS PREPARED TO ISSUE MRS. MAREV A VISA SO THAT SHE COULD VISIT AND MEET WITH CHILDREN. HE WAS CERTAIN SHE WOULD WISH TO TRAVEL ON HER US PASSPORT. POPOV AGREED TO INQUIRE ABOUT THIS POSSIBILITY.

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7. CHRISTOPHER ASKED IF GOB WAS REFUSING TO RESOLVE MAREV CASE BECAUSE OF ABSENCE OF PROPER APPLICATIONS, OR DUE TO REPORTED DESIRE OF CHILDREN NOT TO COME TO THE US. IF GOB'S ONLY OBJECTION WAS TO MAREVS' DEMONSTRATION, HE SAID, THERE WAS ONE QUICK WAY TO END IT, I.E., BY ALLOWING DAUGHTERS TO BE REUNITED WITH THEIR PARENTS. ALTHOUGH HE WAS PLEASED TO HEAR THAT MANY OTHER CASES HAD BEEN RESOLVED, CHRISTOPHER SAID ALL OF THIS MEANT LITTLE ON BALANCE WHEN DEALING WITH THE UNHAPPINESS OF A FEW OR EVEN OF ONE INDIVIDUAL. UNDERSCORING THE SECRETARY'S PERSONAL INTEREST, HE AGAIN URGED POPOV TO REQUEST THAT GOB RE-EXAMINE THE CASE IN TERMS OF ITS IMPORTANCE AS AN IRRITANT IN US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS AND STRESSED THAT ITS RESOLUTION WOULD BE A VERY POSITIVE ACT.

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